

The Need to Belong

Romans 8:12-17

KEY VERSES

So then, brothers and sisters, we are obligated, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— ¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba!^[1] Father!” ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness^[m] with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we in fact suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

This week, our passage in Romans focuses on the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. As Paul addresses the Romans, his emphasis is on the new and wonderful life which opens up for those who put their trust in God. We have a deep need for belonging, and the “spirit of adoption” that Paul describes is at the center of God’s love for us. **Where do you feel like you truly belong, and not just “fit in”? Where have you experienced belonging in a way that has surprised you?**

Adoption was a customary legal procedure in Roman society and usually occurred when an adult had no male heirs. The father would immediately be responsible for all debts and legal obligations, and liable for all actions of the adoptive son. Consequently, it became the son’s responsibility to carry out the will of the father. In the same way, Christ takes on our debts and sin which came as a great cost to our Father. Being a joint heir with Christ comes not only with love, security, and intimacy, but also with great privilege and responsibility. Those of us who have experienced this welcome and inclusion are able and empowered to share it with others. **Imagine what God can do in and through you because of His miraculous spirit alive in you and in the world. How does adoption in Christ help you live in more hopeful expectation, confident that God is always doing a new thing and will be forever faithful?**